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Trump vows to remove ‘thugs and criminals’ from justice system at rally, amid legal woes

BY JULIA SHAPERO - 03/25/23 9:48 PM ET



AP Photo/Nathan Howard

Former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally at Waco Regional Airport Saturday, March 25, 2023, in Waco, Texas.

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"When this election is over, I will be the president of the United States," Trump said at an airport tarmac in Waco, Texas. "You will be vindicated and proud, and the thugs and criminals who are corrupting our justice system will be defeated, discredited and totally disgraced."

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The former president took aim at the various prosecutors investigating him in New York, Georgia and Washington, D.C., decrying "prosecutorial misconduct" and telling a crowd of his supporters that "our enemies are desperate to stop us."

"Our opponents have done everything they can to crush our spirit and to break our will, but they failed. They've only made us stronger," Trump said. "And 2024 is the final battle. That's going to be the big one. You put me back in the White House, their reign will be over, and America will be a free nation once again."

Trump's remarks come just one week after he ignited a political firestorm by suggesting that he could be arrested as soon as Tuesday in Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's (D) hush money probe.

While his prediction has yet to come to fruition, the former president has doubled down on his claims, warning on Friday that an indictment could result in "potential death & destruction."

He struck a similarly bombastic tone as he looked ahead to the 2024 election at Saturday's rally.

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"Either we surrender to the demonic forces abolishing and demolishing, and happily doing so, our country, or we defeat them in a landslide on Nov. 5, 2024," Trump said. "Either the deep state destroys America, or we destroy the deep state."

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The former president also continued his [recent torrent](#) of attacks on Florida Gov. [Ron DeSantis](#) (R), who is widely considered Trump's biggest potential competitor despite having yet to announce a 2024 bid.

"Florida has been tremendously successful for many years, long before this guy became governor," Trump said on Saturday. "Florida has been successful for decades, in fact probably as or more successful than it is now."

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